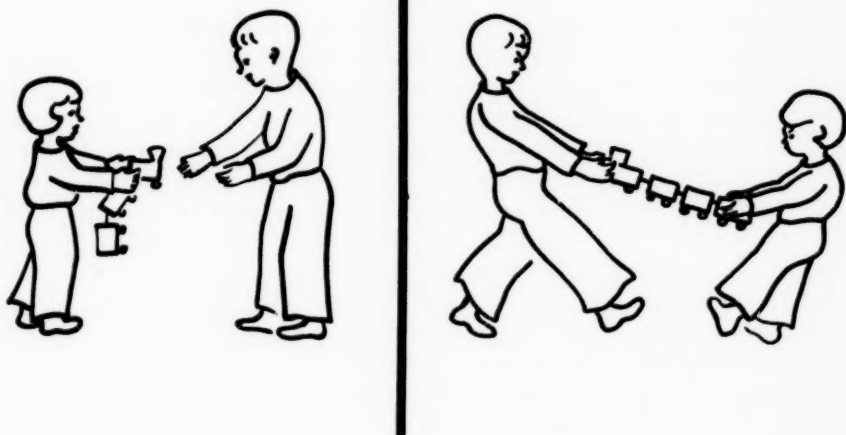


How Do Children Feel Toward Younger Brothers and Sisters?

GLADYS BELLINGER and ETHEL B. WARING



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HOW DO CHILDREN FEEL TOWARD YOUNGER BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

A Study of 23 Children and Their Younger Siblings

GLADYS BELLINGER AND ETHEL B. WARING

HOW DO CHILDREN FEEL *toward their younger brothers and sisters? What makes them feel as they do?* Think of the families with two or more young children you know rather well. See if you can recognize some of the different ways an older child acts toward a younger one. Is there an older child who seems willing and eager to do whatever the younger one suggests? Is there an older one who yields to the wishes of the younger one only when forced to do so? Is there an older one who teases and torments the younger one and then suddenly defends or protects him from an outsider or even from his parents? Is there an older one who is so possessive of his play materials that he resists any interference from the younger one but who at other times swings him, draws him in his wagon, and amuses him for long periods of time?

These are only a few of the puzzling combinations of feelings that older children have for their younger brothers and sisters—puzzling to themselves and puzzling to their parents and to everyone who is concerned with the welfare of boys and girls as they grow up. There are groups of people in the east, in the middle west, and on the west coast who are working at these puzzling combinations of feelings a child has for another in his family. These studies are called studies in sibling relationships, because all the brothers and sisters in a family are called siblings. At a recent meeting these research workers shared with each other the studies on which they were working. In time these studies will put the spotlight on now one and now another part of the puzzle of sibling relationships.

Because it may help you in your thinking about the ways your children feel toward each other and about what you can do to help them get along better, with each other, this bulletin is reporting one study. It is a study of 23 rural children, five to eight years old, most of them six or seven. They had younger brothers or sisters, sometimes more than one. But this study was concerned only with the one next younger, usually a year or two younger.

These children were chosen for study from all of the children of their ages in the rural community because half of their mothers were very strict and half

were very permissive in dealing with them. We wondered if the two groups of children would feel differently toward their brothers and sisters.

The study investigated two kinds of feelings, two that we think may be very important. One of the feelings was called *control*. To a child, "being older" usually means that he is bigger and stronger and that he *can* make the younger child do as he wishes. *Does* the older child usually decide what the younger child shall do? If so, he has high control. If he seldom decides for the younger one or seldom insists on his decision, he has low control. If he and the younger child decide together or take turns in deciding, then the older child has moderate control of the younger one.

The other feeling was called *acceptance*. If the older child *likes* the younger one—likes to see him happy and likes to make him happy—he has high acceptance of him. If the older child dislikes the younger child—likes to see the younger child unhappy and likes to hurt and annoy him—he has low acceptance of him. If the older child pays little attention to the younger one, doing little either to help or hinder him, to make him happy or unhappy, or if the older child both shares and helps and refuses and interferes, then he has moderate acceptance of the younger child.

It seemed promising to try to separate out these two feelings of control and acceptance as a start toward understanding the combinations which are so puzzling.

For the moment, let's think of several children, all of whom have *rather high control*:

Ned was proud of his little sister. He had her do stunts and then said, "Ain't she smart! I taught her."

Sue was very protective. She pushed her little sister back, saying, "Careful. Hot!"

Polly loved to share with her little brother. She brought home her party cookies so he could have some with her.

Tom planned ahead to make his little brother happy. He slipped some acorns under his pillow while he napped so as to surprise him when he wakened.

But sometimes it is quite otherwise:

Mark looked at his baby brother Billy, and said, "I love you" in response to adult urging. Meanwhile, out of the adult's sight, he was pinching Billy hard enough to make him cry.

Joe pushed his brother away, saying, "You're no good!", and then began turning somersaults, calling out, "Look at me."

Olive pushed her little sister down and ran away, leaving her crying.

Robert opened the pen and let out his little brother's pet bunny. Then he ran away, gleefully saying, "Oh, golly, won't he be mad!"

These eight youngsters all took the initiative and did whatever they wanted to with their smaller brothers and sisters and their toys and pets. Ned, Sue, Polly, and Tom all wanted their little folk to be happy. Tom and Polly even planned ahead to make their little brothers happy. Mark, Joe, Olive, and Robert wanted to make themselves happy and even to hurt their younger brothers and sisters, and Robert even planned ahead to make his brother mad.

As you see from these examples, control of younger brothers and sisters can be for or against them. All eight of the children described had rather high control. They decided what should be done and they saw that it was done. Half of them—Ned, Sue, Polly, and Tom—liked their younger brothers and sisters and were very high in accepting them as persons. The other half—Mark, Joe, Olive, and Robert—disliked their younger brothers and sisters and were very low in accepting them as persons.

In the following pages we shall report children from the study who used high, moderate, and low control with their younger brothers and sisters—and gave them high, moderate, and low acceptance. Then an explanation will be offered as to how they may have come to feel as they did. For this explanation we shall report also what we learned about their mothers.

Many studies have shown that children express their real feelings about other persons when they play with pictures or playthings, as they put themselves in the place of the children they see in the pictures or as they act out their feelings in the doll-play stories. The "games" planned for this purpose are called projective materials because they stimulate responses from the child in which he projects his own feelings into the persons in the games. Through such games children reveal their deep feelings which they can not express or talk about directly.

Three series of "games" were used in this study. There were two series of pictures and one series of stories to be played out with dolls and doll things. The pictures were simple black and white line drawings. They were shown to the child in pairs. The child chose the one he liked and told why he liked it. In each picture an older child and a younger child were doing something which could be thought of as friendly or as unfriendly.

With each doll play the child listened to a brief story about an older and a younger child along with comments, "Just like you" and "Like your sister Mary," or "Like your brother Bob." In an exciting part of the story it stopped and the child was asked, "And then what happened?" The child played out the rest of the story in any way he wished. He tended to express in his words and actions the feelings he had for his own brother or sister. The study showed that these games offered ways to measure how the children felt toward their younger brothers and sisters.

The pairs of pictures in the first series gave the child the choice of having the older child:

Share a toy train with the younger one—or snatch it from him

Share the swing, the slide, the wagon, the pet (a kitten), food (apples)—or monopolize these things for himself

Play happily with the younger one—or fight him

Help the younger one in trouble (when he couldn't get his wagon up over an obstacle)—or ignore his predicament

Help the younger one who was crying—or run away from him in his distress

Include the younger one in pleasurable activities with one of his parents (reading stories with Mother and playing with Daddy)—or exclude him and monopolize the affectionate interest of the parent

The pairs of pictures in the second series reversed the roles of the two children. The younger child in the picture was sharing with or excluding the older one. This time when the older child chose a picture he chose a way he liked, or expected, his younger brother or sister to act toward him. The pairs of pictures gave him the choice of having the younger child:

Share with him the toy train—or snatch it from him

Share with him the swing, the slide, the wagon, the pet (kitten), food (apples)—or monopolize these things for himself

Play happily with him—or fight him

Help him out of his predicament (with the wagon)—or ignore him when in difficulty

Help him when in trouble (crying)—or run away from him in his distress

Include him in the fun with their parents (reading with Mother or playing with Daddy)—or prevent him from sharing their affectionate interest and activity

The doll-play stories all ended at a critical time with "And then what happened?" In his dramatic play as the child finished the story, he had the opportunity to:

Share—or withhold from the younger child: food (apples or pears); pet (dog); playthings (garden tools, rake and hoe, or sand toys, pail and shovel)

Share with the younger child—or keep him out of activities that he too would enjoy, such as:

watering the flowers for Grandmother

sweeping the porch for Mother, and

presenting the birthday gift to Father which the two children had made together

(In all of these activities the older child shared—or deprived the younger child of the affectionate appreciation of the adult)

Share responsibilities—or blame the younger child for what happened:
when they took the baby for a ride and the baby buggy tipped over
when they played with a ball and it bounced away in the tall grass, and
when they rode in the wagon which might hit a rock in their way

Help the younger child—or leave him in distress:
when the younger one could not reach the toys he wanted from the high
cupboard, and
when the younger one was left behind in the running and couldn't catch up

The person who made the study had had friendly visits in the homes of the children and they looked forward to "playing games" with her. The "game lady" made three visits to each child. During a visit she played about a dozen of these games with him. In each picture or story there was an older and a younger child. Because the child being tested had a younger brother or sister he usually put himself in the place of the older child. She scored him for each game, once for the degree of control and once for the degree of acceptance he indicated toward the younger child.

Some of the things the children said have been selected to describe for you the meaning of higher control, moderate control, and lower control; and of higher acceptance, moderate acceptance, and lower acceptance. As you read what the children said, remember what the pictures and the stories were about.

THE FEELING OF CONTROL

High Control

"He won't give the little fellow one (apple)... 'cause he wants them all." *Albert*

"He's eatin' pears. . . Big boy will give the little one some." *Bob*

"Pushin' him away; he'll get hurt." *Charles*

"The boy's hittin' the little girl to keep her in the house. . . he'll hit her again." *Dan*

"The biggest boy is tellin' the little boy to pet the kitty." *Ed*

"He'll take the wagon away from the little one; then he'll pull it." *Frank*

These statements came from the records of the "game lady". All six children leave little or no choice to the younger children. In each case the older one decides what the younger one shall do.

Albert and Bob know what will please the little children, but they make different decisions. Albert keeps his little brother from getting what he wants, and Bob gives his brother what will make him happy.

Charles and Dan both use their physical strength to control the younger children, but Charles protects his little brother, whereas Dan hurts his little sister.

Ed and Frank are using things they could share with the little folk. Ed tells his little brother to come on and pet the kitty, but Frank takes away his little brother's wagon to pull it by himself.

All six children use *high control* over their younger brothers and sisters. But they don't all feel the same way toward them; Bob, Charles, and Ed like their younger brothers and sisters and warmly accept them. Albert, Dan, and Frank dislike their little folk and are low in accepting them as persons like themselves. With strong control, some boys and girls look out for their younger brothers and sisters and some look out only for themselves.

Moderate Control

"She's readin' 'em a story and they're both listenin'." *Ann*

"They're both playin' with the kitten and havin' fun." *Beth*

"They're playin' on Father together." *Carrie*

"Two boys playin' with a train." *Dick*

"They're havin' fun pushin' each other in the wagon." *Earl*

"The little girl's goin' up the slide and the big one's standin' by the steps ready to go up." *Fannie*

"She's lettin' the little boy go up (the slide) ahead of her. She'll take her turn afterward." *Gwen*

"Pushin' the wagon. . . get's to ride when the little one gets through." *Hal*

"He's givin' the little brother some stuff. . . some pears." *Jeff*

"The big one is holdin' the kitty and lettin' the little one pet him." *Katie*

"Pullin' the wagon. . . helpin' him." *Linda*

"Tryin' to make the little girl stop crying." *Mamie*

The older children are getting to do pretty much what they want to do and so are their younger brothers and sisters. Ann, Beth, Carrie, and Dick are doing things with their younger brothers and sisters. Earl, Fannie, Gwen, and Hal are taking turns with the younger ones. Jeff, Katie, Linda, and Mamie are being helpful to their younger brothers and sisters in different ways. Linda helps pull the wagon that gets stuck. Jeff gives his little brother some pears. Katie holds the kitty still for petting. Mamie gives her little sister comfort when she is in trouble.

Whether playing together, taking turns, or giving some kind of help, all twelve children are getting what they want or need and so are their younger brothers and sisters. The older ones are looking out for themselves and also for the younger children. They have middle or *moderate control*, neither high nor low control.

Low Control

"The big boy asked the little girl if he could have an apple and she said 'yes.'" *Andy*

"The big girl is crying and the little girl is tryin' to get her to come home so she can get fixed up." *Barbara*

"Playin' with it (the wagon)... (but) the little one always gets in the way." *Cassie*

"He wanted to go up the board and slide down too... (but) the little one made him stay down." *David*

"She asked for a ride... (but) the little boy said she couldn't have a ride. She got mad and went home." *Eva*

"Tryin' to get some apples too... (but) the little boy's got 'em and won't let her have 'em." *Fred*

"Tryin' to get it (Grandma's sprinkling can)... (but) the little boy gets there first to get it." *George*

"The big boy doesn't let him have either of them (the rake or the hoe)... (but) the little boy pulled it out of his arm." *Herbert*

"Grabbin' it (the train)... reachin' for it... fight... the little one gets it." *Jennie*

"Girl standin' and says 'Get away from there so Father can love me'... (but) the boy kicks her and she cries." *Kathie*

"Cryin'... the little boy punched her in the face and he's walkin' away." *Lena*

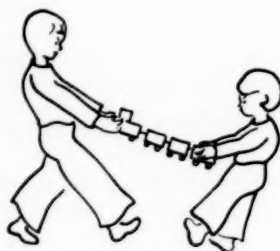
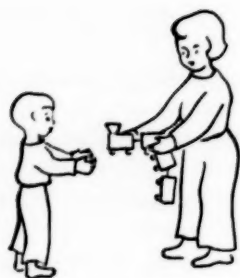
These older children are doing what their younger brothers and sisters let them do. Whether the little one feels kindly and helpful or mean and interfering, it is his choice that decides what the older child may do.

Andy and Barbara get what they want and need only because their younger brother and sister want them to. Cassie gets less. David, Eva, and Fred are denied their wishes by the younger children. George, Herbert, Kathie, Jennie, and Lena try hard to get what they want, but each has to yield to the younger child's decisive action.

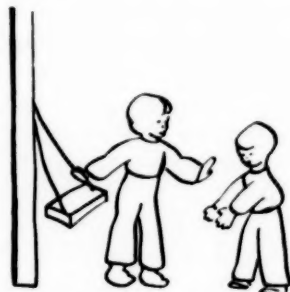
All eleven of these children have *low control* over their younger siblings. They yield to their wishes with or without a struggle. Whether the older children think of their younger brothers and sisters as persons who share with them, try to help them, get in their way, or hurt them, they have such weak control that they cannot deal with the younger ones as they may feel like doing.

THE FEELING OF ACCEPTANCE

The children's sayings on the last few pages show the meaning of high control, moderate control, and low control over younger brothers and sisters. The



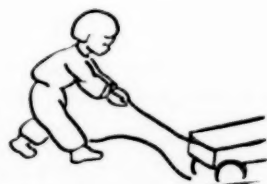
Sharing a toy train—or snatching it.



Swinging the younger child—or pushing him away.

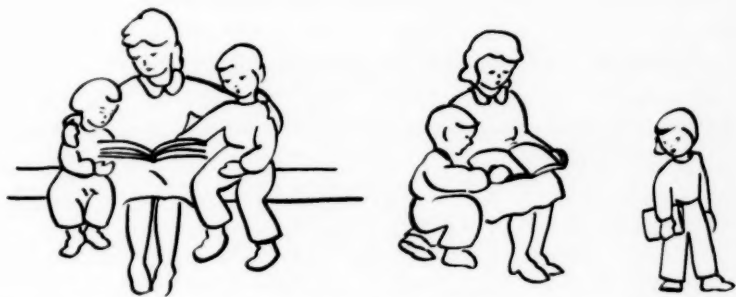


Playing happily—or fighting.



Helping get the wagon over the bump—or paying no attention.

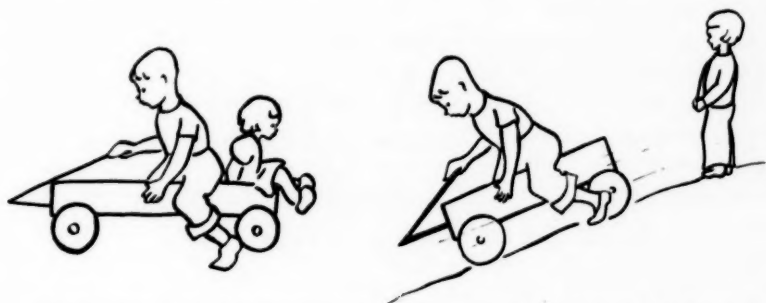
PICTURES USED IN THE STUDY



Including the younger child in his story with Mother—or excluding him.



Letting the younger child have a turn at the slide—or pushing him away.



Sharing his fun with the wagon—or leaving the younger child out.



Sharing Daddy—or leaving the younger child out of the fun.

sayings on the next few pages have been selected to show the meaning of high acceptance, moderate acceptance, and low acceptance of younger brothers and sisters.

The older children have been looking upon their younger brothers and sisters as friends, companions, and playmates; or as "being around" and sometimes "to play with" and sometimes "in the way"; or as competitors and enemies.

Some of the things the children said while playing their games have been selected to build meanings for the three degrees of acceptance. Remember the pictures and the stories as you read what the children said.

High Acceptance

"The boy leans down and the little girl gets an apple. She reaches for it but she's too little." *Amos*

"Lots of dishes came out (cupboard fell over) and he slanted it up again. Put the pans down where the little girl can reach them this time." *Ben*

"Boy's holdin' the cat 'cause the little girl might get scratched." *Chuckie*

"The boy's pullin' the cart up after the little girl went down. . . so she can go down again." *Donald*

"They pull it (the wagon) . . . they got it halfway up now." *Edith*

"Sharin' the wagon and lettin' each other pull the wagon. . . from the grocery store." *Florence*

"Father's goin' to give the little boy a ride first, then the big boy. Give both a ride once." *Gifford*

"He's pushin' the little girl. They're takin' turns. . . She'll probably have more fun that way." *Harry*

"They're sharin' the swing and pushin' each other." *John*

"They're both playin' with the kitten and havin' fun and smilin' at each other." *Ken*

"The father is huggin' the big girl and the little girl." *Laura*

"They're both sittin' in the chair and the mother's readin' to them. . . their mother's got her hand around both of 'em." *Michael*

These boys and girls care about their little brothers and sisters. They know what will please them. They do things for them and plan to make them happy.

Amos, Ben, Chuckie, Donald, and Edith realize that the little folk aren't as big or strong or skillful as they are. Amos and Ben get things within reach for their little sisters. Chuckie holds the cat for his little sister to pet without getting scratched. Donald drags the cart uphill for his sister, and Edith helps hers by pulling along with her.

Florence, Gifford, and Harry share materials and take turns with their younger brothers and sisters. Florence lets hers pull the wagon with her from the grocery store. Gifford and Harry give the preferred activity first to the younger child. Gifford lets his little brother have the first ride with Daddy. Harry pushes his little sister before he swings himself.

John, Ken, Laura, and Michael are sharing with the little folk pretty much on an equal basis—John the swing, Ken the pet cat, Laura Father's hug, and Michael Mother's story reading and affectionate embrace.

All twelve children highly accept their younger brothers and sisters as worthy persons like themselves. They vary from rather high control to moderate control, but always they are thoughtful for the younger children's happiness.

Moderate Acceptance

"They play; she goes and plays with her dolls and he plays with the train all by himself." *Alice*

"The boy gets there first. He takes the sprinkling can. She goes out and walks beside him." *Bill*

"He watered the plants. She brings the pail in." *Chris*

"The boy gives the surprise to Daddy. Little girl says, 'We bought it for you, Daddy!'" *Don*

"Ride in it (the wagon), the boy and the little girl. Boy steers." *Evart*

"Then after she gets done swingin' she'll let the little boy swing." *Flo*

"Little one stays down till the big one gets down." *Gus*

"The big boy will give him *one*." *Henry*

"Said he couldn't have any. Little boy cried, and got one." *Jack*

"Father's got the little girl on his back and the boy in his arms. Boy tells the little girl to get off Father's back." *Karl*

These children are happy near their younger brothers and sisters as long as the little folk do not bother them. They tend to be busy in their own activities and to do little either to help or to hinder the little folk. When the interests of the older and younger children conflict, the older ones share or yield a little, or, on the other hand, they ignore, or bother or tease the younger ones a little. Their feelings for the younger children are not so much for or against them as fairly neutral about them; as long as they themselves are happy, they are glad to have the younger ones happy too.

Alice plays happily with her dolls with no concern for what her younger brother is doing. Bill, Chris, and Don let their younger sisters accompany them, even letting them take some minor role in their activities. They monopolize the sprinkling can and water the flowers, but they let their little sisters walk beside them and Chris lets his sister bring the pail in afterwards. Evart lets

his little sister ride in the wagon with him but he does all the steering. Don does the giving of the joint birthday gift for Daddy, but he lets his little sister tell Father about it.

Flo and Gus are willing to let the little brothers use equipment when they don't want to use it. Henry and Jack are willing to share a little. Henry gives one pear on request, but Jack only after his little brother cries. Karl shares Father's affectionate play for a while but then, even though he is in Father's arms, he tells his little sister to get off Father's back.

These ten children have moderate acceptance of their younger brothers and sisters. They do not go out of their way to help or to hinder them in getting what they want or in doing as they like. They share some and they both refuse and comply with the requests of the younger children. They seem to consider them either as adding to or interfering with their own activities and deal with them accordingly. They like them well enough to include them and even welcome them in certain roles. They dislike them only as persons who interfere and who are irritating in that role. Even in dealing with their interference they exercise neither very strong or persistent, nor very weak or permissive control. Karl does speak to his little sister and tell her to get off Father's neck but only after letting her share awhile. Henry gives his little brother one apple; Alice, however, practically ignores her little brother playing nearby.

Low Acceptance

"Tells his mother and Mother spanks the little boy and puts him to bed and the big boy plays with the cat all the time." *Alec*

"Standin' and tellin' Daddy stuff. Daddy's spanking the girl 'cause she naughty, naughty, naughty girl and the boy is a good boy, good boy, good boy." *Barrie*

"Hittin' the little girl. . . tryin' to keep her in the house. . . Hit her again." *Celia*

"Socked the little boy and the little boy's cryin' and the big boy's walkin' away fast, sayin' 'Me tough'." *Duncan*

"Eatin' apples. . . Little girl's askin' for an apple. . . He says she can't have no apple." *Eben*

"Tryin' to climb up (the slide) and pushin' the little boy away." *Freda*

"Gets it (the train) and the little boy can't do nothin'." *Gladys*

"Takes the rake and shovel to the house and puts 'em away where she can't get 'em. She can't reach 'em." *Homer*

These children look upon their younger brothers and sisters as opponents. They deliberately keep them from doing what they want to do and they do whatever they can to make them unhappy.

Alec and Barrie get their little brother and sister into trouble with their parents so they get spanked and sent to bed. Celia and Duncan do the hurting themselves, 'hittin' and sockin'."

Eben and Freda won't share materials. Eben won't give his little sister any of his apples and Freda pushes her little brother away from the slide.

Gladys and Homer take things away from the smaller children, the things they are playing with. And Homer even puts the things where his little sister can't reach them.

These eight children all feel unfriendly toward their younger brothers and sisters, taking pleasure in preventing them from doing as they wish, in making them unhappy, and in hurting them and getting them into trouble. Their actions involve *low acceptance* of their brothers and sisters. Most of them try, at least, to control the younger children to their own advantage and to the unhappiness of the younger ones.

HOW THE CHILDREN FELT

The 23 children in this study played the three sets of "games" with the "game lady." For each game, whether he was playing with a pair of pictures or a doll-play situation, each child was scored twice, once for his control and once for his acceptance. The 23 scores for one attitude were listed in order. The children whose scores were in the upper half of the list were called "higher" in that attitude, and the children whose scores were in the lower half were called "lower" in that attitude. There were three such lists for each attitude—one for each of the sets of games.

Some children were in the upper half of all three lists and some were in the upper half on two of the three. All these children were called "consistently higher" in that attitude. Similarly those children who were in the lower half on all three or on two of the three lists were called "consistently lower" in that attitude. Occasionally a child was in the upper half on one list, the lower half on a second, and right in the middle on the third. He was called "inconsistent" in that attitude. Two children were inconsistent on control and three were inconsistent on acceptance.

The questions we tried to answer by grouping the children and rating them on the two attitudes were:

How accepting were the children who used higher control?

How accepting were the children who used lower control?

How controlling were the children who gave higher acceptance?

How controlling were the children who gave lower acceptance?

In answering these questions we used only the children who were called "consistently higher" or "consistently lower" in the attitude. Twenty-one were consistent in control and 20 were consistent in acceptance.

The answers to the first pair of questions tell us whether there was a difference in acceptance between the "higher control" and the "lower control" children. Definitely there was. Three-fourths of the children combined higher control with lower acceptance or they combined lower control with higher acceptance.

Twenty-one children were consistent in their control: 11 used higher and 10 used lower control with the younger children.

Of the 11 who used higher control 9 gave lower acceptance

Of the 10 who used lower control 6 gave higher acceptance

The answers to the second pair of questions tell us whether there was a difference in control between the children with "higher acceptance" and those with "lower acceptance." Definitely there was. Three-fourths of the children combined higher acceptance with lower control or they combined lower acceptance with higher control.

Twenty children were consistent in their acceptance: 9 gave higher and 11 gave lower acceptance to the younger children.

Of the 9 who gave higher acceptance 6 used lower control

Of the 11 who gave lower acceptance 9 used higher control

WHY THESE CHILDREN FELT AS THEY DID

How did these children get the feelings they expressed toward their younger brothers and sisters?

We had selected these children for study because their mothers had been rated very high or very low in control as compared with other mothers in the rural community. Were the children who expressed higher control the children of the very strict mothers? Were the children who expressed lower control the children with the permissive mothers? When the children had become strong enough to get younger children to do as they wished, were they more strict or more permissive, as their mothers had been with them? When they found they could make the younger children happy or unhappy, were they more accepting or less accepting, as their mothers had been with them?

A year and a half before these children played their games with the "game lady," someone had visited all the 91 mothers in that community who then had children four or five years old. All of the mothers answered several pages of questions. From their answers each mother was later given three rankings on control and three rankings on acceptance. These were used to make comparisons between the mothers and their children on these two attitudes. Each mother was called "higher" or "lower" if she had all three, or two of the three, rankings in the same half of the whole group of 91 mothers. This made it possible to compare directly the "higher" and "lower" ratings of the children and of their mothers in these two attitudes.

Four-fifths of the children had the same control rating (higher or lower) as their mothers (16 of 21). About two-thirds of the children had the same acceptance rating (higher or lower) as their mothers (13 of 20).

Of the 11 children who used higher control with younger children 7 of their mothers had used higher control.

Of the 10 children who used lower control with younger children 9 of their mothers had used lower control.

Of the 9 children who gave higher acceptance to younger children 7 of their mothers had given higher acceptance.

Of the 11 children who gave lower acceptance to younger children 6 of their mothers had given lower acceptance.

We noted earlier that the children who used higher control were likely to give lower acceptance to their younger brothers and sisters, and those who used lower control were more likely to give higher acceptance. We next asked, "Are these patterns of control and acceptance of children like the patterns of their mothers?"

Fourteen children were higher in one attitude and lower in the other and 11 of their mothers had the same patterns as their children.

Eight children and 5 of their mothers used higher control and gave lower acceptance.

Six children and all 6 mothers used lower control and gave higher acceptance.

Apparently the mothers' attitudes of control and acceptance influenced their children's attitudes of control and acceptance of their younger brothers and sisters.

DID THE MOTHERS KNOW HOW THE CHILDREN FELT?

In order to answer this question we tried to see how well each mother could predict how her child would respond to the games he played with the "game lady." While her child was busy at the games, each mother was telling the assistant which picture she thought he would choose and why, or what she thought he would do or say in playing out the end of each doll story. Her answers were rated on the same rating scale as were his responses, once for control and again for acceptance. The two sets of responses were compared and the mothers who had more agreements with their children were called "better predictors" and those who had fewer agreements were called "poorer predictors."

Did the mothers predict any better on one attitude than on the other? Yes, they did. The "poorer predictors" were about equally poor in predicting about the two attitudes. The "better predictors," however, were somewhat better in

predicting their children's control than in predicting their children's acceptance of the younger children. Mothers can see control behavior but they have to interpret the feeling of acceptance.

Did the better predicting mothers, for the most part, differ in their attitudes of control and acceptance from the poorer predicting mothers? Definitely there was a difference. Of the 12 "better predictors" 10 used lower control and gave higher acceptance. Of the 11 "poorer predictors" 7 used higher control and gave lower acceptance.

What may be the explanation for the attitude pattern of the better predicting mothers? Why may the higher accepting mothers need to exert less control or less frequent control? We cannot say from this study anything about cause and effect. We do not know, for example, whether a mother is a good predictor because she has an accepting attitude toward her child, or whether she is accepting of her child because she can understand how he feels and thinks, or whether she uses lower control because she can foresee how he will act and so can keep one step ahead of him. We can, however, see definitely that one group of mothers were better predictors than the other, and that they used lower control and gave higher acceptance. This combination of the three sets of data makes sense and has meaning in child rearing.

Apparently mothers who highly accept their children, no matter how they may act, can put themselves in the place of their children. They can see situations through their children's eyes and so they can predict the children's feelings and actions. This ability enables them to be helpful to their children. Because these mothers know how the children think and feel and are likely to act, they can help them achieve their goals in ways that are acceptable. The children discover that their mothers' help really does help and that their mothers are *for* them and are helping them toward happiness and achievement. As this happens the children tend more and more to trust their mothers and their mothers' help. They expect to find satisfactions in doing as their mothers direct or suggest. Therefore the mothers need to use less control. When mothers like their children, whatever they may do, and let the children know that they like them, the children can take and use their help. They expect to find that it pays off in their own happiness. Therefore lower control brings their cooperation.

HOW CAN THIS STUDY HELP YOU WITH YOUR CHILDREN?

For this study of children's attitudes of control and acceptance of their younger brothers and sisters, the 23 children were selected because half of their mothers had been very strict and directive and the other half had been very permissive and non-directive with their children a year and a half before. They

had been the top and the bottom mothers in a list from strict to permissive when the 91 mothers of four- and five-year-olds had been studied. The differences between the two groups of children in their relationships with their younger brothers and sisters a year and a half later may help you see your own children more clearly. The reports of these children may help you recognize high, moderate, and low control, and high, moderate, and low acceptance in their interactions with each other. Then you may be able to recognize these attitudes in your own children.

The study shows, moreover, that these children tended to express in their interactions with younger brothers and sisters the patterns of attitudes that they had experienced in their interactions with their mothers. In this study the two patterns that were outstanding were (1) higher control and lower acceptance and (2) lower control and higher acceptance. Mothers with the latter pattern—lower control and higher acceptance—were more likely to be "good predictors" who could anticipate their children's feelings in a given situation and could therefore foresee and take care of their needs and wishes ahead of time. They could avoid trouble by foresight and therefore they less often needed to exercise strict control. They might also be able to deal with situations with less control because they had had the opportunity to plan how to deal with them before they had to deal with them.

This study indicates that mothers expressed to their children the two attitudes as a pattern, and that apparently the children interpreted the two attitudes together and expressed them together in their dealing with younger children. The study shows that the ways the mothers felt toward their children got across to the children in everything that happened between parents and children. The way the mothers felt about the children made their control of them mean help and happiness—or interference and neglect. Evidently mothers who highly accept their children can see through their children's eyes so that they can understand why things happen and can appreciate how hard the children are trying. They can plan for their success. They can offer help that the children can accept and use. Therefore lower control wins cooperation from their children.

On the other hand, mothers who do not know how their children feel and think do not understand what their children are trying to do, and so they can not help them achieve their purposes. When these mothers enter into the children's affairs the children think they are interfering and opposing them rather than helping them. It therefore takes stronger control to get these children to do as their mothers want them to do.

Furthermore, the study implies that it pays mothers to find out what to expect of children at different ages and stages. Such knowledge may help them learn how their own children feel and think—children always have their reasons—and help them understand their children's actions. They can discover what

their children are trying to do. Many of the children's goals, when they are discovered, are in line with their adults' goals for them. When adults discover this they can cooperate with the children—instead of controlling them—and the children can then cooperate more fully with the adults.

WHAT HAVE THESE MOTHERS GIVEN US FOR FURTHER STUDY?

These two groups of mothers, because they differed so much, gave us the start on several other studies. The later studies are concerned with both mothers and fathers, and with children's interactions outside as well as inside the family. They deal with other patterns of the two attitudes, such as (1) higher control and higher acceptance; (2) lower control and lower acceptance; and (3) moderate flexible control (that is as much as the situation seems to require for the child's safety, health, or development—sometimes more and sometimes less) combined more often with higher than with lower acceptance.

All of these follow-up studies to date are reinforcing the findings from this study that children get their attitudes toward other children from their interactions with their parents; that they get the two attitudes in a pattern; and that they interpret any degree of control according to the personal acceptance they feel by the parent who is strict, moderate, or permissive in control.